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No. 22

First Steps in C. S. A.

20. THE GUILD SOCIAL ORDER

(CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY—II)

SECTION I. THE GUILD SOCIAL ORDER & STATE CORPORATISM

The Guild Social Order, made up of Vocational Groups, "is essentially a system which sets up a professional authority with the duty to promote the common welfare and general interest of the profession, and with the consequent right to enact laws binding on all who follow the profession and to represent them before higher authority." (Guild Social Order, p. 21. C. S. G. Oxford.)

The "higher authority refers to the State, which recognises the authority of each Vocational Group elected from within each Group and in control of the Group's internal affairs. This authority of the Vocational Group binds all who, though free to join any industrial profession, may not evade it once they are in any profession.

The Catholic Social Worker must make a clear distinction between the Guild Social Order advocated by Pius XI, and the systems of State Corporatism established by some National Governments after the first world war.

State Corporatism denotes an economic organisation or union in which, "The State," writes Pius XI, "grants juridical personality to the union, and thereby confers on it some of the features of a monopoly". Moreover, in such corporations, "strikes and lock-out are forbidden," and they tend to have "an excessively bureaucratic and political character" which "ends in serving particular political aims rather than in contributing to the initiation and promotion of better social order." (Q. A. sec. 93-95.)

SECTION II. THE GUILD SOCIAL ORDER & TRADE UNIONS

"A Free Trade Union within an Organised Profession" is the belief of all who support the Guild Social Order. In a former lesson we examined the association of workers and employers and we

found that they are the natural outcome of the principle of association and the right of association; as taught by Pope Leo XIII in his *Rerum Novarum*.

In the history of industrialism, the trade unions have been fighting machines for the rights of the workers, and as such have tended to become "class organisations," because they group together only wage-earners. Modern trade unionists recognise more and more that the interest of the working-class is bound up with the prosperity of the whole industry, and therefore, the interests of the workers demand also the good of the whole industry. In other words, a closer collaboration between workers, management and others in industry is necessary for the welfare of the working class. Pope Leo XIII pointed this out when he wrote "Capital cannot do without Labour, nor Labour without Capital." (R. N. sec. 15.)

Now the Guild Social Order, without doing away with Trade Union, aims at safeguarding the interests and welfare of the workers within the framework of the Guild, while allowing the Trade Unions to function in their own sector of a trade or industry, for the important purpose of furthering the welfare of the whole industry. In fact, within the Guild Social Order, the Trade Unions have a wide and important duty to perform. Perhaps, the most important duty is educational, that is to say, these modern unions should insist on the fact that the workers' prosperity is bound up with the prosperity of the whole trade or industry; that the workers cultivate an alert sense of their rights and of their responsibility for their own welfare and for the common good. It is through the Trade Unions, chiefly, that the industrial workers must learn that the pride of profession becomes a furnaceman as much as it does the most skilled lawyer or surgeon.

Hence, the modern development of Trade Unions and the growth of industrial organisation make it clear that there is not only a place, but a positive need of our Free Trade Unions within the Guild Social Order.

SECTION III. TOWARDS A GUILD SOCIAL ORDER.

While explaining the Social Guild Order, Pope Pius XI, in *Quadragesimo Anno*, has a word of praise for the ancient guilds of the medieval age. These ancient guilds, he says, "though by no means perfect in every respect, corresponded nevertheless in a certain measure to right reason according to the needs and conditions of the times." (sec. 97.)

The Guild Social Order which the Holy Father advocates does not, in any way, mean a return to the ancient Craft and Merchant Guilds of former times. These Guilds served a very useful purpose in a more simple economic system, and helped to build a social and economic life free from most of the dangers of insecurity which afflict the modern workers.

Today with the failure of both Capitalism, and Economic Statism, there is need of some kind of an organisation which will help build up a secure social order, just as the ancient guilds helped to build in a former period of history. That organisation is the Guild Social Order. There are, in fact, both social and industrial tendencies which indicate that the idea of the Guild Social Order is gaining ground in modern society. Of these tendencies the most important are: the view that business and industry are not the concern of employers and workers alone, but of the whole community and the common good; that commercial and industrial people have a public duty to perform.

In advanced industrial countries, the establishment of Joint Industrial Councils, and committees composed of representatives of employers and workers to deal with industrial disputes indicate a tendency to organise the industry on the lines of the Guild idea. On the economic side the tendency to develop industry on the Guild idea is slow, but not entirely wanting. The era of the large scale industry and industrial unit, except in some heavy industries, is giving place to the smaller industrial unit, in which Labour-Management relationships can be more cordial, and which allow a better opportunity for the spread of the Guild idea.

SECTION IV. THE GUILD SOCIAL ORDER & CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION.

In the first lesson of this series we said that the aim of Catholic Social Action is to remove the cause of social disorder, and to rebuild society on Christian principles of life. This implies a two-fold activity: a reform of moral conduct and a reorganisation of social institutions.

In working for the establishment of the Guild Social Order, all Catholic social workers will find ample scope and opportunity for the exercise of this twofold activity. In the first place, the Guild idea of the common good of the whole of society must be spread around: next, the need of collaboration between all who work in the same industry, must be a subject of study and example: espe-

cially in our Trade Unions, the workers must be able to realise that theirs is a place of pride in society, and theirs also is a job of responsibility towards the whole human family. Catholic social workers in Employers' Federations must study ways and means so that employers tend more and more to share the responsibility of industrial affairs with the workers.

Catholic social action has its specialised sections for workers, employers, farmers, mechanics, and so on, to "educate the members to an understanding and practise of the duties of their status of life which includes their vocational duties." (Cardinal Pacelli to President of the Semaines Sociales de France.)

READINGS—

Same as in Lesson 19.

Guild Social Order, Catholic Social Guild, Oxford.

Von Nell-Breuning: Reorganisation of Social Economy.

EXERCISES—

1. Define Guild Social Order.
2. Mention the difference between the Guild Social Order and State Corporatism.
3. What countries established State Corporative Organisation?
4. Does the Guild Social Order do away with Trade Unions? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Explain how Catholic Social Action may advance the development of the Guild Social Order.

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